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Different Islands, Different Experiences: American Travel Accounts of Sāmoa and Hawai‘i, 1890–1910

“NO ARTIST CAN PAINT such a landscape; . . . I have never seen so splendid a combination of beauty and grandeur as a sunrise in Samoa.”¹ “The Earthly Paradise! Don’t you want to go to it? Why, of course. Just pack your valise, get your ticket and start for Honolulu.”² With such enticing sentiments as these, American men and women traveled to Hawai‘i and Sāmoa seeking adventure and new experiences. After completing their journeys, the travelers published enthusiastic descriptions of their holidays. Predictably, in the books and articles released soon after their return to the mainland, the travel writers described the islands’ weather, the means of transportation on and between the islands, the hotels, the food, and the souvenirs they purchased. The travel accounts diverged, however, when the writers described the people they met and the places they visited. Travelers to Hawai‘i overwhelmingly stressed the natural as well as the built

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environment of the islands, while the tales of Sāmoa emphasized the interactions of the travelers with the islanders. Although both island groups were beautiful and exciting, Hawai'i, by the turn of the twentieth century, had become mundane and civilized. Sāmoa, by comparison, provided travelers with a safe savagery that made the trip more exotic and worthwhile than its northern counterpart.

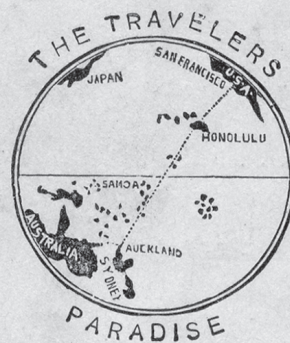
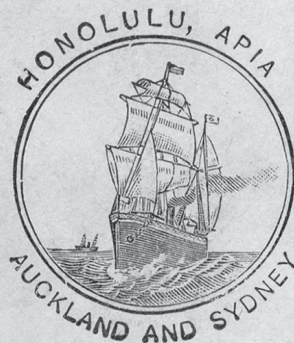
People traveled to the Pacific islands to carry out political or military missions for the United States, religious work for churches, scientific expeditions for universities, rejuvenation of their health, or as middle-class tourists seeking adventure. Some wrote about their journeys to entice travelers to the South Seas to get them to use their company's ships, hotels, and services or to invest in the Pacific islands. Others described their adventures with the intention of providing readers a "trifling souvenir" of the trip or to give readers a glimpse into their journeys to beautiful places. Some traveled only to Hawai'i, while others made grand tours of the Pacific Rim starting in Hawai'i, sailing south to Sāmoa, then Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, and north again to the Philippines, China, and Japan before heading back to the American mainland.³ Finally, a few traveled because "these South Sea islands still sing the siren songs to passing mariners, who once they land, would gladly stay forever."⁴ For whatever reason they visited or wrote about the islands and islanders, the travelers found the Pacific islands enchanting. But where did they hear about the islands, which sirens sang songs to them in America's heartland?

Novelists and speakers who described the South Seas served as modern sirens. Western literature about the Pacific began with Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, the largely true story of the four years Alexander Selkirk spent marooned on a South Pacific island. Then Jonathan Swift published *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), a tale that took place on fictitious Pacific islands.⁵ The next significant literature about the Pacific came from the pen of American Herman Melville. Having worked on a whaling vessel, lived among cannibals in the Marquesas, and traveled extensively in the Pacific, Melville wrote *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), which became the models for modern South Seas fiction. In addition, Melville wrote four more novels based in the Pacific, including his most famous, *Moby Dick* (1851). A half century later, in 1892, Julian Hawthorne and Leonard Lemmon, literary critics for *American*

Literature praised Melville's work, saying, "Not to have read *Typee* and *Omoo* was not to have made the acquaintance of the most entertaining" writer of the era.⁶

Others who sang the sirens' songs included Charles Warren Stoddard and Louis Becke. Stoddard, part of the group of San Francisco writers of the 1860s that included Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and Ambrose Bierce, first visited the Pacific in 1864. His multiple journeys inspired him to write six books, including *South-Sea Idyls* (1873) and *Summer Cruising in the South Seas* (1874). By 1901, the Oceanic Steamship Company's Passenger Department distributed Stoddard's *A Trip to Hawaii* to prospective travelers.⁷ Louis Becke has been called the "Rudyard Kipling of the Pacific." After 20 years wandering around the South Seas as a trader, beachcomber, and blackbirder, Becke wrote 35 books about the Pacific, and has been favorably compared to Melville. His first, *By Reef and Palm*, was published in 1894.⁸ Mark Twain was another siren of the Pacific. In 1866, Twain, soon to become one of America's greatest authors and speakers, visited Hawai'i for four months and returned to California in need of funds. To raise capital, Twain began his career as a speaker, giving his first public lecture about his travels to Hawai'i. This lecture became one of his seven featured topics during his lifetime.⁹

Although it cannot be said with certainty how many travelers were lured to the Pacific by fiction writers, some evidence exists suggesting that the literature did bring some visitors to the shores of Hawai'i and Sāmoa. For example, Michael Shoemaker, an author of several books, quoted two pages from one of Stoddard's pieces about the Pacific in his own writing, while John LaFarge, a noted American artist and author, described Tutuila as "a new and strange sensation, a realizing of the old pictures in books of travel and the child traditions of Robinson Crusoe."¹⁰ In 1895, John D. Spreckels, owner of the Oceanic Steamship Company and son of Claus Spreckels, noted in an article for *Overland Monthly* that "ever since the days" when Twain and Stoddard wrote about Hawai'i tourism to the islands increased. He considered tourists part of his Oceanic Steamship Company's "cargo" and explained that upon returning to their homes, the travelers performed "missionary work in persuading their less fortunate fellows to follow their example" by traveling to the islands. In addition, several tourist guidebooks existed about Hawai'i, including the best known,



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Hawaii,
Samoa,



New Zealand and
Australia

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BY THE

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OF THE

OCEANIC S. S. CO.

Perpetual Spring. Rarest Tropical Luxuriance
A Traveler's Paradise.

Kilauea, on Hawaii, the largest active Volcano in the World.

Round trip tickets to Honolulu at \$125.00. Through tickets to Auck'and or Sydney allow stop-overs at Sandwich Islands and Samoa. Send 10 cents in Postage Stamps for 'Kilauea,' a pamphlet of exquisite photo-gravures. Address:

J. D. SPRECKELS & BROS. CO

GENERAL AGENTS,
138 Montgomery Street.

San Francisco.

Typical ad from steamship companies, 1895. From *Overland Monthly*, v. 25, no. 150, (June 1895): 1.

The Tourists' Guide through the Hawaiian Islands (1890) by Henry M. Whitney. This edition could be mail ordered by would-be tourists for 75 cents.¹¹

Whatever encouraged the prospective travelers, planning the trip to the islands was not as difficult as it might have seemed. J. D. Spreckels and Brothers acted as general agents for Pacific visitors. Advertisements and articles in such popular publications as *Overland Monthly* and *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* described travel to Hawai'i, Sāmoa, New Zealand, and Australia. "Splendid American Steamers" of the Oceanic Steamship Company left San Francisco every four weeks bound for the "Milky Way of the ocean" that included Sāmoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and Rarotonga. The *S.S. Sierra*, one of the Oceanic vessels, boasted 66 first-class cabins and 36 second-class cabins with an all-American crew of 264 officers and men. The first-class cabins contained private bathrooms, electric fans and lights, as well as hot and cold running water. Second-class and steerage cabins were also available on the Oceanic's vessels.¹² Around the turn of the twentieth century, the cost of a first-class round trip ticket, including meals, side tours, hotels, and 350 pounds of luggage, ranged from \$110 to \$200 to Hawai'i and up to \$320 for an eight-week all-inclusive journey to Sāmoa. A small pet dog could accompany the traveler for an additional five dollars or a large one for ten dollars. No discounts were given to missionaries traveling on business.¹³

The on-board experience of the travelers during their 2,200 mile journey from San Francisco to Hawai'i ranged from pleasurable to fearful. In 1896, Charles Greene, a travel writer, described his journey aboard an Oceanic ship as a "pleasure both in experience and in memory." On other cruises, passengers reported seeing sharks, whales, porpoises, and seabirds. Several years later, in 1907, W. W. Wheeler, his wife, and daughter had a more exciting journey from Honolulu to Sāmoa. The ship's boiler and electrical system shut down causing the vessel to turn into the sea swells, roll heavily, and drift for twelve hours. After breakfast on the day of the troubles, Wheeler noticed that over a dozen "big man-eating sharks" circled the ship and commented that their appearance was not a good omen. But, thanks to the ship's able engineer, the lights and boiler were repaired within a half day. Others reported that the ships rolled around "in an uneasy fashion" and that the "ocean was not Pacific."¹⁴

A number of shipping companies had vessels plying the waters between San Francisco, Honolulu, American Sāmoa and points beyond. Two of the largest included the American lines of the Oceanic Steamship Company and Matson Navigation Company, which replaced Oceanic as chief carrier by 1905. Once in Honolulu, travelers often sought out the charms of the other islands belonging to the Hawaiian group. To get to Hawai'i, Maui, or Kaua'i, travelers used Wilder's Steamship Company or Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company. In addition to sightseers, the inter-island vessels carried mail, cargo, and islanders visiting relatives or doing business on the other islands.¹⁵

Upon arrival in Honolulu on the sixth or seventh day after leaving San Francisco, the sightseers attended to necessary bureaucracy at the docks before being permitted to disembark. Customs House Officers inspected the luggage and collected a two dollar per passenger Hospital Tax to support the Queen's Hospital, and the port doctor inspected passengers for any signs of contagious illnesses that could harm the island's population. In 1894, James Douglass English, a dentist from Indiana, had his six-shooter confiscated at the docks because martial law had been declared in Honolulu due to the dethroning of Queen Lili'uokalani the previous year. Once the government of Hawai'i cleared the visitors, the travelers took a 25 cent taxi ride from the wharf to any number of good hotels in downtown Honolulu.¹⁶

By the 1890s, travelers arriving in Honolulu found an abundance of hotel choices ranging from a few places remaining from the whaling era, such as the American House where Mark Twain stayed in the 1860s, to first class establishments, including the Royal Hawaiian and the Alexander Young hotels in downtown Honolulu. Rooms without board and board without rooms could be easily found in the city. Hotels that catered to families and to believers in temperance also existed. The first-class hotels included 200 rooms, elevators, private telephones, and wall-to-wall carpeting. Some of the establishments provided car rentals for one dollar per day, as well as one day film developing.¹⁷ Located three miles from downtown Honolulu and once the home of Hawaiian royalty, Waikiki became an important hotel destination when the first-class Moana Hotel, now the Sheraton Moana Surfrider Hotel, was completed in 1901. It contained an elec-

tric-powered elevator, private bathrooms, brass beds, telephones, and a roof garden. Considered expensive at \$1.50 per night, the Moana Hotel also boasted a 300 foot pier where musicians played, tourists strolled, and boats docked alongside.¹⁸

Reactions of the hotel guests were generally positive. Anne M. Prescott, a writer and traveler, found that “every wish will be attended to” at the Hawaiian Hotel, while Michael M. Shoemaker, also a writer and traveler, enjoyed the “soft minor strains of the Kanaka minstrels” who sang and danced on the porch and under the trees of the hotel. On the other hand, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a member of the Rosicrucians and a “New Thought” writer, found that “we might as well be in Springfield, Mass., or Hartford, Conn.” because of the amenities that the hotels in Honolulu provided their guests.¹⁹ She likely expected, or hoped, that the facilities were going to be more rustic.

For those traveling on to Sāmoa, the choice of hotels was not as enticing as Hawai‘i’s. In Western Sāmoa, guests could stay at the Tivoli Hotel in Āpia, ‘Upolu. Rooms with the American plan could be acquired for \$3.50 to \$5.50 per day or \$10.50 per week at the “first table.” Built in 1893, the wood and iron Tivoli offered broad verandas



Moana Hotel, Honolulu, circa 1920. Hawaiian Historical Society.

and provided boats, horses, and other vehicles for touring the island.²⁰ When traveling to American Sāmoa's main island of Tutuila, visitors needed to disembark quickly as vessels reportedly only slowed down long enough to transfer passengers and mail bags to small cutters that continued the journey to Pago Pago. While on Tutuila, from 1900–1901, passengers could lodge at the Oceanic Hotel, which had wide balconies and two floors. Unfortunately, the Oceanic Hotel closed its doors in October 1901 due to a lack of patronage and competition with the Tivoli Hotel. Despite its being closed, Mary and John Woolley stayed there in 1905 with the assistance of Secretary of Native Affairs E. W. Gurr who worked for the United States Naval government in the Territory. Gurr provided furniture, linens, and whatever else the visitors needed from his own home so they would be comfortable while visiting Tutuila.²¹

Touring the islands was a relatively easy task, especially in Hawai'i. Once the traveler became accustomed to using *mauka*, toward the mountain, and *makai*, toward the sea, instead of compass directions,



Oceanic Hotel, Pago Pago, American Sāmoa, circa 1901. Jean P. Haydon Museum Photo Collection, American Sāmoa Historic Preservation Office, Pago Pago, American Sāmoa.

there were numerous ways to enjoy the sights and travel to wherever he or she desired. In the 1890s, "airy cars drawn by a span of lazy mules" provided service between downtown Honolulu and Waikiki. By 1901, an electric street railway ran the distance and cost only five cents. For minimal cost, omnibuses, hack service, and saddle horses could be rented in Honolulu. The Hawaiian Promotion Committee encouraged people to "bring your automobile; you will want it." By 1907, Hawai'i boasted 300 to 400 cars. Five railways operated in Hawai'i. The longest one on O'ahu allowed access to the more remote regions of the island, including Hale'iwa.²² In western and eastern Sāmoa, roads were not as good as in Hawai'i, and tourists rented saddle horses or bicycles. On the other hand, W. W. Wheeler noted that he had to walk everywhere.²³

Sāmoa and Hawai'i provided many new experiences for those adventurous enough to try them. In Western Sāmoa or American Sāmoa, travelers could attend a *siva-siva*, a *kava* ceremony, visit Sāmoan *fale* or homes, and visit Āpia in Western Sāmoa. Some visitors considered the *siva-siva*, Sāmoan dancing, "lascivious and immoral," while others said the dances were "lewd only so far as semi-nudity and certain pointing and grimacing may make them so." Bartlett Tripp found the *siva* graceful and an excellent demonstration of strength and agility, but found that the "movements of the dance became more rapid and violent, until at its height it is turned into an orgie [*sic*], a wild scene of gyrations and gesticulations, accompanied by barbaric music and demoniac cries and yells."²⁴ Despite the excitement of the dance, visitors did not express displeasure with it but found it, instead, more exciting than Western dancing.

Kava drinking also intrigued the visitors. Samoans welcomed guests into their communities with *kava* ceremonies inviting good fellowship among the people participating in it. *Kava*, a local plant [*Piper mythy-siticum*], is known to produce sociability, is not considered addictive, and has no dangerous side effects. According to travel writer Charles Green, to refuse to participate in the *kava* ceremony, "would be a more pronounced discourtesy than to decline to drink whiskey out of a tin cup with a cowboy."²⁵ Frequently prepared by the village chief's daughter, the *kava* plant was chewed to the proper consistency. Once masticated, the juice was spit into the *kava* bowl and the process was then completed. However, Westerners disapproved of drinking *kava*

because the young women had chewed the plant. As a result, when serving Westerners, Sāmoans changed the ceremony to pounding the plant in the *kava* bowl instead of chewing it before placing it in the bowl. This made the process more palatable to the visitors.²⁶

In addition to the more formal entertainments on Sāmoa, such as the *siva* and the *kava* ceremony, tourists could enjoy side trips around Tutuila. Secretary of Native Affairs Gurr sometimes invited travelers to his home where they received lessons in harvesting and opening coconuts. Other adventures included visiting Mr. and Mrs. Boss of New York, who maintained an astronomical observatory two miles outside of Pago Pago, or enjoying moonlit boat rides with Sāmoan rowers who sang songs as they propelled the vessel along.²⁷

Visiting Sāmoan homes or *fale* also fascinated travelers to the islands. Put together without the use of nails or ironwork and topped with a thatch roof, “no photograph of what appears to be a thatched hut can give any idea of a fine Samoan house.” Visitors noted that the buildings were without walls and instead used mats that could be rolled down as necessary. Michael Shoemaker found that without walls the “entire life of the occupant [was] open to inspection.” The intricacies of the building so intrigued Cmdr. E. B. Underwood, fourth United States naval governor of American Sāmoa, that he suggested a *fale* be included in the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair.²⁸

In Western Sāmoa, owned by the Germans after the Convention of 1899 split the islands of Sāmoa into German and American control, travelers could visit Āpia, “a European outpost.” In Āpia, the tourists could patronize drinking establishments unavailable in “dry” American Sāmoa, conduct business at consul general offices from several nations, and attend churches of several denominations. In addition, a visit could be made to Vailima to see the home and gravesite of Robert Louis Stevenson who lived there until his death in 1894.²⁹ Enjoying a picnic on ‘Upolu was often an excellent way to spend the day, according to travelers. A writer for the *Catholic World* described the experience as a “social institution” that all should enjoy. After a “toil-some climb,” tourists enjoyed a picnic at the base of a “beautiful little mountain waterfall” surrounded by tropical forest and jungle. Then the travelers were invited to jump or slide into the water at Papaseea with the Sāmoans whose “screams of laughter and delight [made] the valley ring with their enthusiasm.”³⁰

For those traveling to Hawai'i, the experiences were considerably different than for those who traveled to Sāmoa. Noticeably less intimate interactions between tourists and Native Hawaiians occurred during the travelers' holidays. There was a sense that an Old Hawai'i and a New Hawai'i existed next to each other, one for the islanders and one for the tourists. In many respects, it appears that Hawai'i had already developed into a tourist center catering to the needs and preconceptions of the travelers. Some mainlanders preferred the tourist version of Hawai'i, such as Minnie Leola Crawford, an experienced teenage traveler. During her seven week trip to Hawai'i, she attended an opera across from the 'Iolani Palace but declared the songs, music, and traditions of Kamehameha's dynasty "strange, weird, and interesting," and concluded that she did not like Hawaiian ways. The teenager also toured the Bernice P. Bishop Museum and found Hawaiian material culture much more interesting in the display cases than in everyday life. In 1889, Charles Reed Bishop established the museum in honor of his wife Princess Bernice Pauahi, the last direct descendant of the Kamehameha dynasty. The museum contained the largest collection of items relating to Hawaiian history, culture, and society.³¹

Tourists could also obtain permission to visit the 'Iolani Palace. Application through the traveler's national representative or consul was needed to secure admission. A visit to the Barracks for the King's Guard behind the Palace was also encouraged. In 1894, James English, who had become friends with a military man, visited the Palace despite a state of martial law in Hawai'i due to restrictions resulting from the overthrow of the Queen. He never mentioned Queen Lili'uokalani's name in his writing, but commented that the palace felt like a "fairy land or flowering paradise." Several years later, other travelers managed to meet the Queen and described her as a "stately dame" and "much handsomer than her pictures indicate."³²

Travelers also visited the Waikiki Aquarium (1904), the Honolulu Zoo (1914), the Thespian Theater (1847), and the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra (1902). The Kawaiaha'o Church, one of the oldest buildings in Honolulu, the mausoleum of King Lunalilo and his father on the same property as the church, and the cemetery of early missionaries were also sites visited by the travelers. Others toured the Kamehameha Schools and the Fish Market.³³

Travelers visited Hawaiian *hale* [houses] and hula demonstrations.

As in Sāmoa, tourists found the Hawaiian *hale* “very picturesque” and a look into the homes’ gardens akin to getting “a glimpse of fairyland.” In 1890, the artist LaFarge found that few knew how to build the traditional *hale* any longer, while by 1914, William Dickson Boyce commented that, in his opinion, the “most attractive” homes in Hawai‘i were those built in the style of southern California, showing an obvious preference for the Western influence on the island. Ash Slivers found the *hale* plain, crowded and containing impure air.³⁴ Although travelers found the Sāmoan *siva* not entirely to their liking, they were less inclined to comment positively about the hula. They described the hula as “disgustingly suggestive,” “more obscene” than the French can-can, “obscenely vulgar,” and “outclasses all other wild, primitive exhibitions.”³⁵

Just outside of downtown Honolulu, the travelers visited Waikiki and experienced “sea-bathing,” “surf-riding,” and “surf-canoeing” at its beautiful beaches. Swimmers delighted in the clear and warm waters, the smooth sandy bottom, and the lack of “finny monsters,” although a few still expressed a fear of sharks. Regarding surfing, Shoemaker compared it to the mainland’s winter tobogganing. In 1905, the tourist souvenir book, *Camera Views in the Paradise of the Pacific*, compared surfing to “riding a bucking broncho [*sic*].” Some tourists tried “surf-canoeing” where an outrigger was “paddled by skillful natives” to the edge of the reef, turned back towards the shoreline, and swiftly carried to the beach by the surf.³⁶

Away from Honolulu and Waikiki, tourists visited the island’s taro patches, the United States military bases at Schofield Barracks and Pearl Harbor, and the Chinese workers on the sugar cane and pineapple plantations. In addition to these locations, tourists visited the “must see” natural sites of Diamond Head and Punchbowl, both extinct volcano craters not far from Honolulu, Nu‘uanu Pali where Kamehameha I defeated the warriors of O‘ahu in 1795, and Kilauea, the active volcano on the Big Island of Hawai‘i.³⁷ Ella Wheeler Wilcox found the moonlit motor ride around Diamond Head enjoyable, while others found the walk to the top of Punchbowl easy and discovered “few views in the island are fairer than this” To get to Nu‘uanu Pali, travelers hired a carriage or a one-horse buggy for the long ride to the top. Words such as “Pali is beyond the power of pen to describe” and is “one of the greatest attractions Honolulu has for

visitors” described the tourists’ awe at the site.³⁸ Numerous pages in the travel books were spent describing the indescribable sights outside Honolulu.

One of the highlights of a trip to Hawai‘i was a side tour to Kilauea, an active volcano on the Big Island of Hawai‘i. Often included in the cost of the tour to the islands or for an additional 50 dollars, the Wilder Steamship Company and the Inter-Island Steam Navigation Company offered regularly scheduled five day trips to the island and made arrangements for their guests to stay at Volcano House. Opening in the 1840s as a grass hut and costing one dollar per night for room and board, the Volcano House went through a series of renovations throughout the 19th century, each making it more luxurious. Situated at 4,400 feet above sea level and at the northeastern edge of the “Caldera of Kilauea,” the hotel’s veranda overlooked the crater.³⁹

After an arduous journey from the docks to the caldera, the travelers descended 465 feet into the crater. The visitors walked on the molten lava’s crust while seeing “grey and red lines in the cracks below us that are fire” and felt “the undefined terror and spookiness of the [volcano].” While there, the sightseers went into the lava tubes in the volcano, visited sulphur baths, and dipped their postcards into the molten lava to burn the edges before mailing them home.⁴⁰

Considerably smaller in size than Hawai‘i and with fewer star attractions such as Kilauea or Nu‘uanu Pali, Sāmoa had less to offer the travelers than its northern island cousin. However, the writers still found time to comment about its natural beauty, albeit in significantly fewer pages than they did about the environment of Hawai‘i. Travelers found Sāmoa a “dreamy tropical atmosphere that throws its veil over every landscape, making the sunshine more glorious, the moonlight more romantic . . .” Others commented on Sāmoa’s waters “flecked with the dainty lacework of foam” and on the reefs where “a harvest of rainbows has been imprisoned . . .” Bartlett Tripp, a member of the United States Commission to Sāmoa in 1899, found the sunset “not less beautiful nor less impressive” than the Sāmoan sunrise, but noted the lack of twilight in the islands.⁴¹

Not inclined to just write about the beauty of the environment they experienced in the islands, the travelers also wrote of their impressions of the Sāmoan and Hawaiian people they encountered on their journeys. Tourists to Sāmoa devoted many pages to describing their

meetings with the islanders, while those who visited Hawai'i wrote considerably less and were more inclined to unpleasant comments about the locals they met. Visitors to Sāmoa expressed an obvious Western bias towards work ethic, race, and Christianity but found the Sāmoans a "noble native race." Words commonly used to describe Sāmoans included amiable, good-natured, light-hearted, passionate, and friendly. Travelers also found the Sāmoans to be a "race of children, with many of the virtues and vices that belong to immaturity. . . ." Despite that, both male and female travelers found Sāmoans warm, inviting, and excited about inviting strangers into their homes to share their meals. Laurance E. Newell, in 1902, noted: "you are made as welcome as if you were one of themselves" and "one feels instinctively that one is in the midst of friends, whose sole idea is to make you happy and comfortable."⁴² Some even found that Sāmoans had something to teach westerners, praising the Sāmoan social structure for a lack of poor people in the island society and that Sāmoan fathers assisted Sāmoan mothers in the care of children and in food preparation. Nearly all visitors to Sāmoa noted the religious nature of the inhabitants and commented on the beautiful churches and schools built by the villagers.⁴³

Another word used to describe Sāmoans was lazy. The writers attributed this characteristic to the fact that the island provided everything the people needed with little work. One-time short-term resident, Juan DeOliveres, attributed the disinclination to labor in fields or factories because "nature provides for every requirement [of the Sāmoans]" After the American annexation of the islands in 1900, Captain Benjamin Franklin Tilley, the first Commandant of Naval Station Tutuila, believed the Sāmoans would develop under the tutelage of the United States. Travelers also believed the Sāmoans possessed a better character than other Polynesians, were more intelligent, and of a "higher order" than all Pacific islanders except the Hawaiians.⁴⁴

Travelers made numerous comments about the physical characteristics of Sāmoans. They found the islanders to be "veritable living bronze statues," "figures on the Greek vases," and "for human scenery, Samoa is the Garden of Eden" ⁴⁵ Gene Underwood, the wife of the fourth United States Naval Governor of American Sāmoa, provided a more sensual description of Sāmoan men. Describing the young men who greeted incoming vessels, she wrote they "gave the

picture its last touch of savage wildness, their brown bodies glistening with cocoanut oil, and nearly all of them nude from the waist up. . . .” Visitors even noted the clothing of the Sāmoans they met describing the tapa cloth lava-lava worn by the men and finding that Sāmoan tattoos “looked like silk.”⁴⁶

Unlike references to Sāmoans, references to Native Hawaiians often referred to the islanders’ state of civilization and that they were nearly all “assimilated” into American society and culture. Some travelers noted that the Hawaiians “have begun” to adopt Western ways, but that they still did not understand the “proprieties of life.” Visitors also expected the islanders to speak English and were disappointed when the Hawaiians spoke in “the language of the Kamehamehas.”⁴⁷ Others commented that Hawaiians “lack the power of reasoning and concentration” and that they “will not long trouble the [election] polls” implying that the islanders did not possess the intellectual capacity to run Hawai‘i like the mainlanders could. John Musick, a lawyer from Missouri, found that the Anglo-American population “fashion and mold society in Honolulu” and the neighboring islands.⁴⁸

As with the Sāmoans, the travel writers found the Hawaiians lazy and “enthusiastically averse to any kind of toil” and that “regular work is almost an impossibility to the Polynesian.” Few authors attributed the Hawaiians’ implied laziness to the fact that nature provided for Hawaiians as it did for the Sāmoans. John L. Stevens, one of the key figures in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, claimed that because nature provided for the islanders, the Hawaiians failed to advance socially and industrially. He said that “one day to [the Hawaiian] is as another” and no forethought was necessary to the islander because he or she did not need to plan.⁴⁹

The visitors to Hawai‘i described the islanders’ physical characteristics in less flattering terms than they did the Sāmoans as well. John LaFarge, who visited Hawai‘i and Sāmoa and wrote glowing descriptions of the Sāmoans’ physical appearance, found Hawaiian women “pretty” but “tend to fat.” Others claimed that Polynesian women “change from voluptuousness to obesity” after the age of 25 and that their eyes are “dull, from the use of native liquor, *ava*” as they age.⁵⁰

Several travelers found it important to note that Hawaiians did not practice cannibalism. In Whitney’s 1890 tourist guide to Hawai‘i, he quoted a visitor from Boston stating that “no half-clad cannibals peep-

ing from behind the trees, seeking a victim” existed in the islands so tourists need not worry about their safety. Other writers also noted that Hawaiians did not practice cannibalism.⁵¹ The simple mentioning of cannibalism tells us that mainlanders held preconceived notions of the Pacific islanders given to them by novels, earlier travelers, or newspaper accounts.

References to the financial condition of the Hawaiians found its way into visitors’ reflections about the islands as well. Minnie Leola Crawford, the teenage traveler, believed “a poor old Kanaka” so poor that she purchased an octopus for him. Others noted that if the visitors tossed coins over the sides of ships at the Honolulu docks, young Hawaiian men would dive for them because presumably they needed money, and that “there was a great swirling and commotion as if submarine monsters were battling” over the money.⁵² Although Christian missionaries had been in Hawai‘i since 1820, comments about their religious practices were rare.

The travel writers noted that the islanders worked in service positions, such as hack drivers or service personnel at the hotels, and they often referred to Native Hawaiians in terminology used for African Americans on the mainland. For example, Anne Prescott described Hawaiians as “darkeys,” or in one instance she called a Hawaiian singer a “little brownie.” Another female traveler, Katharine Gerould, compared the islanders to African Americans finding “it is impossible not to match up the negro [*sic*] type against the Polynesian and find it [African Americans] wanting.” She also found bi-racial Hawaiians “a motley breed!” while others called them “half breeds of assorted colors.”⁵³

Another experience of the travelers in Hawai‘i and Sāmoa included trying new culinary dishes. Once again, the visitors’ experiences differed. Those in Sāmoa tried local foods, while the travelers to Hawai‘i found familiar things to eat. In Sāmoa, travelers ate tropical fruit, fish, chicken, wild pig, squid, flying fox, *bêche-de-mer* (a variety of sea cucumber), and the “capital eating” *palolo* (a sea-annelid, worm-like creature harvested annually in October or November).⁵⁴ In Hawai‘i, travelers enjoyed ice cream, albeit in new flavors, such as guava and mango. At Mr. Luce’s on Merchant Street, travelers could purchase the best brands of beer brewed for the islands and German and French wines and champagnes, while picnic lunches were sold at Mr. H. E. McIntyre

and Brother's store. One Hawaiian dish that many visitors tried was *poi* made from cooked taro. Edward W. Osborne, a bishop from Springfield, Illinois, exclaimed, "My visit to Honolulu would hardly have been complete without this feast."⁵⁵

Finally, travelers to the Pacific sought souvenirs of their journey to Sāmoa and Hawai'i. In 1907, W. W. Wheeler found that American Sāmoa only possessed three stores with merchandise worth two thousand dollars. Some of the items for sale included *tapa* cloth, mats, baskets, and shells. Used as clothing, *tapa* came from the inner bark of the mulberry tree, beaten until soft, and painted with native pigments in traditional designs. Sāmoan fine mats made of woven pandanus leaves were generally unavailable for purchase as a Sāmoan family's wealth was based on the quantity and quality of mats they owned; however, occasionally mats would be offered for sale to travelers. In addition, bead necklaces, fans, wood carvings of canoes, *kava* bowls, and other "curios" found their way back with the visitors.

In Hawai'i, tourists purchased bamboo fans, items made of *koa* wood, shells, mats, and *poi* bowls. They also acquired items not traditionally Hawaiian, such as jellies, jewelry made from coins, photographs, souvenir spoons, "Aloha" perfume, and Kona coffee. From visits to Kilauea, travelers acquired Pele's Hair, "a curious and beautiful film of lava" found only at the volcano.⁵⁷

Travelers to the Pacific wanted to experience what they had read about in books and stories. Their descriptions of Hawai'i and Sāmoa differ, one noting the natural and built environment and the other the people they met. There are a number of possible explanations for why the accounts differ in their reactions to the islands and islanders. Americans had been in Hawai'i nearly three generations longer and in greater numbers than in Sāmoa. As a result, there was less Hawaiian culture readily accessible to the average tourist who traveled only to the recognized sites of the islands, such as Honolulu and Waikiki. In 1897, John R. Musick found "the Honolulu of today is the creation of the foreigner, the result of his handiwork," and by 1914, William Dickson Boyce found "the one thing still Hawaiian about [Honolulu] is the names of many of the streets."⁵⁸ As a result, traditional Hawaiian culture needed to be sought in out-of-the-way places, areas few tourists were willing or able to go. Hawaiians may have chosen to keep what remained of their culture to themselves and did not allow

mainlanders into their personal lives like the Sāmoans did. Perhaps, the Hawai‘i that tourists saw was, in part, a creation of the Hawaiians themselves. They allowed the travelers to see what they wanted them to see and no more.

In Sāmoa, because fewer Westerners lived there, little need for traditional Western entertainments such as theaters, museums, zoos, or orchestras existed. Therefore, travelers were immersed into Sāmoan culture quickly and completely. Sāmoan society was more intact than the Hawaiian one. For the Sāmoans, Anglo travelers were rare enough to still make them exciting and desirable to have around. Tutuila and ‘Upolu possessed fewer roads and accessibility to the interior of these islands was restricted to only those brave enough to attempt rugged terrain, forcing visitors to mingle with the local people in the villages and along the seashores.

In 1906, Mary and John Woolley found “for human scenery, Samoa is the Garden of Eden, and for beauty, Honolulu is the capital of the earth.”⁵⁹ They saw Sāmoa as more original and untouched by Western civilization than Hawai‘i. Few people traveled to Hawai‘i, but even fewer continued to Sāmoa, giving those who did bragging rights with their friends. Even today, travelers to Hawai‘i can avoid Hawaiian culture if they desire, while those to Sāmoa are often invited to participate in local society. Visitors saw the islands of Hawai‘i and Sāmoa as safe and exotic locations, but admired one island group for its natural scenery and the other for its humanity.

NOTES

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